

Book reviews

Medical Virology

by Frank Fenner and David O White
pp xviii+390 illustrated \$9.50 £4.45
New York & London: Academic Press 1970

The appearance of yet another textbook of medical virology reflects the rapid expansion of this subject in recent years. The current trend of publishing separate books on each of the various aspects of medical microbiology will be a cause of regret – particularly to impecunious students. It can, however, be justified on the grounds that there are considerable differences between virological and bacteriological disciplines. This is true not only of the nature of the two groups of organisms, but also of their pathogenesis and our current attitudes to therapy and prevention of the diseases they cause.

This new book is of particular interest since its senior author is well known for his larger work 'The Biology of Animal Viruses'. Indeed, the particular value of this new book is that its first part is a shortened version of the latter volume and is an excellent general account of the nature of viruses and the diseases they cause. The second part is a series of chapters each dealing in a conventional manner with the major virus groups. The concluding chapter is purely clinical and deals with the etiology of the various viral syndromes. The whole is written with great clarity and with refreshing touches of humour.

This is a book which can be strongly recommended to medical students, for it will provide them with a sound knowledge of the protean manifestations of virus infection, which range from the common cold to cancer.

R B HEATH

Frozen Section in Surgical Diagnosis

by Andrew A Shivas and Suzanne G Fraser
pp ix+261 illustrated £6
Edinburgh & London: Churchill Livingstone 1971

The objective of this book by a pathologist and a senior laboratory technician is to encourage wider use of rapid frozen sections in the diagnosis of surgical specimens. To achieve this the authors have produced what is essentially a colour atlas showing the histological appearances of a variety of conditions in cryostat sections. There is no claim to comprehensiveness; nevertheless the illustrations include quite a wide range of tissues

and pathological conditions, indicative of the type of material likely to be submitted to the laboratory for frozen section diagnosis. Indeed the large number of colour plates, which are the dominant feature of the book, are taken from frozen sections actually prepared for rapid diagnosis. The generally excellent colour reproduction faithfully reflects the microscopic appearances of unfixed cryostat sections with all their imperfections and variations in quality. Although the primary purpose is to show what cryostat sections look like, in one or two instances illustrations of paraffin sections prepared from the same material would have been valuable for comparison.

There is an introductory essay on the value of the method and the procedure adopted at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, where the service has been in operation for twenty years. This is followed by a section on the technical aspects.

The book is intended for pathologists (or surgeons) unfamiliar with the interpretation of frozen sections, and to these it should prove a useful introduction. It is not to be supposed that diagnostic skill can be acquired otherwise than by experience, whatever method is used for the preparation of histological sections.

A G STANSFELD

Infection in Hospital

A Code of Practice
edited by G L Gibson
pp ix+101 £1.25

Edinburgh & London: E & S Livingstone 1971

This very short how-to-do-it book is a revised version of a code of practice prepared for the Northern Ireland Hospital Authority. Of the eight authors three are medical administrators and five are microbiologists.

Part I, The Health of Hospital Staff, contains sound recommendations on pre-employment medical examination, and on immunization of various classes of hospital staff. It is difficult to understand why only ambulance drivers are asked to sign a certificate if they refuse smallpox vaccination.

Part II concerns the management and disposal of patients with infectious diseases, of which 27 are listed alphabetically; 14 others, for which no special action is needed, are mentioned. One of